1: Hombourdin E-4,4 (1934) 1837 F972 Haiti F972
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ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Beauvais " gained some successes " over the undisciplined forces in Port-au-Prince " and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recognise the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them."

There are other indications that life in the valley did not fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 1830, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> " It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government."

It is thus apparent that the institution of marronage, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point " from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac."

Of but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1820 as 53,635; but in 1825 as only 16,077. Whether the region included under the term " Mirebalais " differed at the two periods, or whether the hardships resulting from the internal strife that rocked Haiti after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an

Ls Hawkeville E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[10] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[11]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less than two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled withes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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